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THE
REASONABLENESS
OF THE
Christian Religion,
A
SERMON

PREACHED

At the *Visitation* held at *Stoakesley* in
Cleveland, in *Yorkshire*.

Being the first Visitation of the Reverend Mr. *Long*,
B. D. and Arch-Deacon of *Cleveland*.

By *Ja. Lowde*, Rector of *Esington* in *Cleveland*, and
Chaplain to the Right Honourable *John Earl* of
Bridgewater. &c.

L O N D O N,

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THE
REASONABLENESS
OF THE
Christian Religion
SECTION

By
J. C. H. W. M.
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To the Right Honourable
JOHN Earl of **BRIDGEWATER**,
VISCOUNT BRACKLEY,
BARON of ELLESMERE,
Lord Lieutenant of the Counteys of
BUCKINGHAM and **HERTFORD**,
And one of His Majesty's Most
Honourable Privy Council.

My Lord,

WHEN I was first desired to make this Sermon publick, I was sensible that it wanted, and yet was afraid to entitle it to so great a Patronage; but the Knowledge and happy Experience I have of your noble and generous Temper, together with the many and great Obligations I lie under from your Lordship, do not
only

The Epistle Dedicatory.

only encourage, but oblige me to take all Opportunities of testifying the Sence I have of your Favors, and my Gratitude to the World; so that I have this to plead in excuse of my Presumption, that even Duty and Justice required this Dedication: For you have a Right and Title to all the Results of my Studies of this Nature, provided they were worthy of your Acceptance, seeing it was your Lordships Favor to which I at first ow'd these quiet and happy Opportunities of a Studious Retirement.

And that which further adds to my Obligations is this, that the Remoteness of the Place doth not put me beyond the Reach of that Continued Kindness, whose Influence, like that of Heaven, challenges a kind of an Ubiquity.

Upon

The Epistle Dedicatory.

Upon these Accounts, my Lord, I presume to prefix so great a Name before so mean a Piece: Mean I call it, not in Respect of the Subject Matter, but as to the manner of my handling it. The Subject is great and worthy, containing the Reasons both of our Religion and Loyalty; and whatever Defects I may be otherwise guilty of in treating of them, I shall yet make this abundant Compensation to the World, in propounding so great an Example of both as your Lordship is, to its Imitation.

The Jews required a Sign, and the Greeks looked after Wisdom. Those Signs indeed are now ceas'd, nor is this an Age of Miracles; yet, thanks be to God, we can yet justly boast of such moral Miracles (if I may so speak) of Religion and Learning as your Lordship may be justly counted.

My

The Epistle Dedicatory.

My Lord, I shall only add my Prayers to God, that the King and Kingdom, that both Church and State may be long happy in your able and faithful Councils, that Religion and Learning may long enjoy so great a Patron, and Allegiance and Loyalty may be long encouraged and promoted by such a great and eminent Example, and remain,

My Lord,

Your Lordships most du-

tiful and faithful

Servant,

Ja. Lowde.

1 COR. I. 23, 24

*But we Preach Christ Crucified, to the Jews
a stumbling Block, and to the Greeks
Foolishness; but to them that are cal-
led both Jews and Greeks, Christ the
Power of God, and the Wisdome of
God.*

THere is nothing that affords us more
Pious and more Profitable matter of
Meditation, then the Consideration
of the Way and Method, by which God first
designed, and in due time effected mans Sal-
vation: For hereby we come to the most
excellent and most useful piece of Knowledge,
that we are capable of, that is, to the Know-
ledge of God and of our selves, this Method,
when duly considered and rightly understood,
being not only the Illustration of all the Di-
vine Attributes of Wisdome, Justice, Power,
and Goodness; but hereby also we see the

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shortness of our own meer humane Apprehensions, when we consider by what weak and improbable means, at least in Mens esteem such, God has effected the greatest things, that ever Heaven designed, or Earth bore Witness to, thus giving an undeniable Argument of the Truth and Divinity of that Religion, he then instituted ; But this admirable contrivance of Almighty God met not with an answerable Reception in the World, for both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, either out of weakness or wilfulness, either out of ignorance or perverseness were offended at it ; these two sorts of Men, tho' differing much among themselves, yet both agreed against Christ and his Religion, and thought it a very improbable thing to reconcile the World to the Cross of Christ, and indeed a very unreasonable thing to persuade Men to Worship a crucified Saviour.

As for the *Jews*, they were prepossessed with Apprehensions concerning the Eternity of their Law, and the Splendor of their expected *Messias*, so that nothing that was outwardly mean and humble, did agree with that pompous Scene of things which they had fancied.

They

They expected a great Prince for their *Messias*, who should indeed cause an alteration in the Government, but none in their Religion: For that they look'd upon as eternal, and never to undergo the least shadow of change.

And therefore for the *Jews*, who were thus accustomed, at least in their own thoughts, to Pomp and Ceremony; for them who look'd upon themselves as the Children of *Abraham*, and so Heirs of all the Glorious Promises made to them in Scripture; for them to embrace an humble, persecuted, and at last crucifi'd Saviour, this they thought inconsistent with their Religion, as *Jews*, and with their Reason, as Men.

And Christ as he was to the *Jews* a *stumbling Block*, so was he to the *Greeks*, that is, as they thought themselves, the learned part of the *Gentile World*, *Foolishness*. Now the *Greeks* were offended at the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, they looked upon it as an Ignorant and unlearned Institution, they expected to have found it full of Philosophy, or some kind of nice and curious Learning, which was in request and esteem among them, and being disappointed herein, they began to entertain low and mean thoughts

concerning it, as not worthy to enter into their Scholes: and upon this account was the Gospel to the *Greeks Foolishness*. These were the two Grand Imputations under which the Gospel then lay, both from *Jews* and *Gentiles*, to both which the Text is a direct Answer, that what ever mean thoughts the *Jews* might entertain concerning the Crucified Jesus, and what ever unworthy apprehensions the *Greeks* might have of his Doctrine, yet upon a due Consideration of things, to those that are called, that is, to those that become Christians, for that is the plain and proper and usual sense of *Calling* in Scripture, to those who Judge by better Principles and surer Rules it is the Power of God, in Opposition to the *Jews*, and the Wisdom of God, in Opposition to the *Gentiles*.

These two Scandals here cast upon Christ and his Religion, together with the respective Answers which the *Apostle* here gives to them, are the general parts of the Text, and shall be the Subject of my present discourse.

First in Answer to the *Jews* I shall do these two things.

1. I shall shew what little reason the *Jews* had to be offended at Christ, or his Religion in General.

2. I

2. I shall shew the particular Grounds and reasons upon which they were offended, and also the weakness and unreasonableness of them.

1. The *Jews* had little reason to be offended at Christ or his Religion in general, if we consider,

1. The great correspondency that is betwixt the Prophecies of the Law, and the History of the Gospel, how exactly the Gospel is the fulfilling of those Prophecies of the *Messias*, which we meet withall in the Old Testament. So that if the *Jews* had not given themselves up to an obstinate perverseness, *Moses* himself would have lead them to Christ; for how exactly do we find him described by the Prophets both as to the manner, time, and place of his Birth, and the most remarkable Circumstances of his Life and Death; these I shall not particularly insist upon, as supposing them sufficiently known and manifest.

Isaiah 7.
14.
Mat. 1. 23.
Gen. 49.
10.
Mat. 2. 1.
Micah 5. 2.
Psal. 118.
10.
Luke 24. 7.

So that if it be possible to know a Person by any precedent Marks and Characters that may be given of him, then we may be fully assured that Christ was that *Messias* which was Prophecied of in the Old Testament, especially if we consider that there were some Marks and

and Characters, which did, and only could belong to himself, as his being born of a Virgin, and the manner and time of his Resurrection.

To these we may add the Consideration of those hard shifts and frivolous Evasions and forced Interpretations, that the *Jews* make use of to evade the force of this Argument, which tho' singly in their own Nature are no Proofs, either of the truth of the Christian or falseness of the *Jewish* Doctrine in this particular, yet, to an Ingenious and impartial Considerer, they are additional confirmations of that truth, which before we had more positive Grounds and Reasons to believe.

2. The *Jews* had little reason to be offended at our Saviour, if we consider the concurrence of those Qualifications, which they themselves required in a true Prophet, or at least in order to his tryal whether he was so or no; Now the generally receiv'd Qualifications of this Nature were these, 1. An eminent degree of Wisdom and Prudence. 2. Of Courage and magnanimity. 3. Of Vertue and Piety. All which were so remarkable in our Saviour, that the malice of Men and Devils was either forced to acknowledge them, or not able to say

say any thing material against them. To which if we add his Power of Working Miracles, nothing further could be required in order to his being receiv'd as a true Prophet, so that if the *Jews* would but either have admitted our Saviour to his tryal, in this particular, before they had condemn'd him; or in judging made use of their own Rules in other cases of the like Nature, they must have acknowledged Christ to have been a true Prophet: So that he had both the Prophecies of the Law, and the Principles and Practices of the *Jews* themselves in the like Cases in favour of him, if any thing could have prevailed against Prejudice and Interest; but they reject him by a Law which they themselves never acted by before, and which they according to their own Principles must resolve shall never after be drawn into a Precedent.

3. The *Jews* had no reason to be offended at Christ or his Doctrine, if we consider those many excellencies and advantages the Gospel had above the Law, so that whatever it was the *Jewish* boasted it self above other Nations of the *Gentile World*, even in those very things did the Gospel much outdo them. As,

1. We have under the Gospel a clearer
Ma-

Manifestation of those fundamental Truths, which were but obscurely shadowed out under the Law. Now are shadows turned into Substances, and Types into Realities; the Law came by *Moses*, but *Grace and Truth* by *Jesus Christ*.

I doubt not but the more divinely Instructed among the *Jews* did rightly understand, and piously expect a future state of Immortality. Yet 'tis probable that the Common sort amongst them look'd no further then the Letter of the Law, expecting no other reward of their Obedience, then the enjoyment of a Land flowing with Milk and Honey, it being the great Prerogative of the Gospel, that it brought *Life and Immortality to Light*, that is, made a more full and clear discovery of it.

2. We have a more plentiful effusion of the Spirit and divine assistance now under the Gospel, then ever was known under the Law, this was the time of which it was Prophesied, that God would power out his Spirit upon all Flesh, and that all from the highest to the lowest should be *Θεοδιδασκτοι* taught of God; But this is not so to be understood, as some of our late *Enthusiasts* do interpret it, as if we should now expect any new Revelations either
above

above or besides the Will of God made known to us in Scripture.

But this Propheſie was then ſignally fulfilled, when God powr'd out his Spirit upon the Apoſtles on the day of *Pentecoſt*, thereby furniſhing them with Gifts and Graces for the planting of his Church and promulging the Goſpel.

And it is alſo this day fulfilled in the Hearts of all good Chriſtians, as God by his preventing and aſſiſting Grace doth accompany particular Perſons, and aſſiſts them to Work out their own Salvation *with Fear and Trembling*.

And thus much for the firſt particular, to ſhow in general that the *Jews* had no juſt reaſon to be offended at Chriſt and his Doctrine ; and that it was rather Malice and Envy againſt his Religion, that it had ſo much of Truth and Reaſon on its ſide, rather than Contempt for the want of either, that moved them to a diſlike of it.

2. I ſhall ſhow the particular Grounds and Reaſons upon which the *Jews* were offended at the Goſpel, which more eſpecially were theſe two.

1. They thought the Chriſtian Religion not ſufficiently confirmed with *Signs and Wonders*.

C

2. They

2. They were offended at the meanness of Christs Life and the dishonour of his Death.

1. They were offended at the Christian Religion, as supposing it not sufficiently confirm'd by Miracles, *Verse 22. The Jews require a Sign.*

But in Answer to this it will be sufficient only to remind you, that Christ did Confirm his Doctrine, and the truth of his mission with sufficient Signs and Miracles, beyond the possibility of any reasonable Exception, if we consider either the number, or quality or manner of Performance, or the end and design of them, which was always either for the necessary Confirmation of his Doctrine, or in Compassion to the Souls and Bodies of Men, never to gratifie Curiosity in others, or vain Glory or Ostentation in himself; so that the manner of their performance, sometimes only by a word, together with the end and design of them, the promoting the great Designs of Truth and Charity, those seem still to add more Divinity to his Miracles.

And farther our Saviour at his leaving the World, did invest his Apostles with the same Power of Working Miracles, so far and so long as was necessary for the planting of his Church:

Church : Which thing also is an Argument of the Truth and certainty of our Saviours being a *true Prophet*; for that Impostors commonly are neither able nor willing to convey and communicate that Art to others, which they pretend to themselves.

This being premis'd, the unreasonableness of the *Jews* requiring still further Signs, will appear upon these following Accounts.

1. The too great frequency of Miracles, tho' it would not destroy the Nature of 'em, yet wou'd it make them less Solemn and Venerable, less Cogent and Argumentative, and more liable to the Cavils and Contempt of ill disposed Men, for by how much any thing is more frequent and usual, the nearer it comes to Common and Natural, at least in the Apprehensions of some Men, and familiarity even of Miracles, as well as of other things, would in time, breed Contempt.

This would give too just an Occasion to that which yet the more improv'd Atheism of our Age asserts notwithstanding, that there are no such things as Miracles in the World; but that all things of this Kind are to be resolv'd into the fixed course of Nature.

In short, if Men should once come to this; to desire one Miracle for the Confirmation of a-

nother, thus they might run on in *Infinitum*, and end in *Scepticisme*.

2. The *Jews* requiring Signs, in that manner as they did, was not only saucy and impudent; but also would have been, if granted, a Lessening of that Evidence, which otherwise our Saviour gave by denying them, nothing would satisfie them; but Signs suited to their own Humors and Fancies, they must have ~~enquired~~ Signs from Heaven, (tho' they had too) tho' those were more liable to Exception, than these nearer and more palpable Signs, which he more commonly shewed them.

The Chief Priests and Scribes told our Saviour, when he hung upon the Cross, that if he would come down, that is, save himself from Death, they would believe: Now what an unreasonable request was this? they would disswade our Saviour from doing that upon which theirs and all Mankinds Salvation did depend; but what if, upon granting their request, they would not yet have been as good as their Word? They could not give our Saviour any good security for performance. Yet further, they did hereby indeed and in truth contradict their own pretences, for if he had so come down from the Cross, as to save himself

self from Death, they could not, upon just Grounds, have believed him to be the true *Messias*.

In short, if he had thus gratified them in their request, he could not have given them that, which was indeed a greater Sign than that which they demanded, that is, the raising himself from the dead, thus could he not have been true to his own Word, whereby he promised to give them the Sign of the Prophet *Jonas*, *Mat. 12. 38.*

3. Supposing, what yet we cannot reasonably Suppose, that the *Jews* who liv'd at the Writing of this Epistle, had not been Eye-Witnesses of several Miracles done by the Apostles in their Days, yet they had a constant, universal, and undoubted Tradition of these things delivered down to them from the former Age, and they who will not believe such a Tradition as this, that is, when they have all the Evidence that a thing of that nature is capable of, neither would they believe but either find or make some Occasion of cavilling at that which they saw done before their Eyes. Our Saviour prefers the Faith of those who believe and yet have not seen, before those who have, and it is not to be supposed that he would commend a Groundless Faith or vain credu-

credulity if we should believe nothing now but what we saw, this would destroy the end and use of all History, and needlessly take up the greatest part of the time of one Age to act over again the things of another.

Thus much in Answer to the first Offence that the *Jews* took at the Gospel, that they thought it not sufficiently confirm'd by Miracles, but still requir'd a *Sign*.

2. The *Jews* were offended at the meanness of Christs Life, and the Dishonour of his Death.

In Answer to this in general : Christs appearance in the World, together with all the Circumstances of it, according to a true estimate of things, was as far above any thing that was mean and Vulgar, as it was below that Phantastick Pomp and Splendor which the *Jews* unreasonably expected, here I might Instance in that Glorious Quire of Angels which first usher'd him into the World, and that extraordinary Star that directed the Wise Men to the place of his residence, both which spoke him to be no common or ordinary Person; those several Attestations of the Divine Love and Approbation from Heaven, and the forc'd acknowledgment that the Devils themselves made of him, his Transfiguration in the Mount, and
Ascension

tion into Heaven, all these spoke him to be more than Man, by all which and several other Instances of his Power, this Sun of Righteousness, tho' clouded in the Vailes of Flesh, by such Vigorous Eradiations gave undeniable Testimonies to the World of his Divinity.

But more particularly the way and Method of Christs appearance in the World, was the most proper and effectual means to prove himself to be, what indeed he was, the Power of God. And this will appear upon these following Accounts.

1. The way wherein Christ appeared in the World was the most proper means for the accomplishment of those ends, for which he came into it; which were. 1. To offer himself a Sacrifice for Sin, and so to reconcile Man to his offended Father. 2. To leave us the most powerful Example of an Holy Life.

Now in order to the first, he became Man, that so he might put himself into a Capacity of dying for us, and in order to the second, he chose this mean Condition, thereby to make his Vertues and Graces appear more eminently Divine, thus by his Example encouraging and recommending those more weighty and difficult Duties of Christianity, Humility, Patience and Self-denial.

Christ

Christ very well knew that the whole Malice of Men and Devils would be vigorously employed to traduce his Actions and scandalize his Religion, he therefore chose this Valley of a meaner Fortune, wherein he might, if possible, not only be safe from ; but from whence also he might more easily repel them.

It he had appeared in the Pomp and Glories of an Earthly Kingdome, and so prevailed upon the easie World, then had he wanted that Argument of Divinity, which now his Religion hath, that is, a prevailing over all Opposition without the help of any outward Assistance.

¶ Besides it would have been counted Policy rather than Devotion, that joyn'd Men Proselytes to a flourishing Religion.

But now the Stricktness of our Saviour's Precepts, the severity of his Discipline, the great contrariety his Doctrine bore to the corrupt Customs and Vicious Inclinations of the World, all these show that it was nothing less than a Divine Power accompanying it, that made it successful.

2. Christ thus showed himself to be the power of God, because he hath done that which nothing but the Power of God could do, As.

1. He hath destroyed the Kingdome of Satan without us. 2. He has subdued our wicked Lusts and Corruptions within us.

1. He has destroyed the Kingdome of Satan without us ; this the *Pharisees* themselves acknowledge that he cast out Devils ; but then, they say, it was by *Belzebub*, the Prince of the Devils.

But Christ did very solidly and rationally confute the Weakness and Silliness of this surmise.

A Kingdome, says he, divided against it self is brought to Desolation, and an Houſe or City divided against it self cannot stand, and if Satan be divided against himself, how shall his Kingdome stand? For he that can believe that the Devil should assist him, whose great end and design was no other, but only to destroy Sin and Wickedness, and to encourage and promote Vertue and Piety in the World, such an one may by the same Reason believe and assert any thing.

Christ came into the World to dissolve the Works of the Devil, and to restore things to the State wherein they were before: for God might have seem'd frustrated in his End and Design in creating Man, if that Method of his Providence first instituted for Mans Salvation,

if it had been so utterly broken, beyond the possibility of all recovery; but now Christ hath given the Devil and all the Powers of Darknels to understand, that he is able to produce Light out of Darknels and Order out of Confusion; thus hath God restored man again to a possibility of Salvation, notwithstanding all the former attempts and present endeavours of the Devil to the contrary.

2. Christ by the Gospel has subdued our wicked Lusts and Affections within us, and this was more then either the *Jewish* Sacrifices of themselves, or the imperfect Rules of the *Gentile* Philosophy was ever able to perform: He has not only himself overcome the Devil, but also enables every true Christian to do the same, this he doth by the assistance of his Holy Spirit, whereby we become more then Conquerors over all Temptations. Thus Christ doth at once instruct and strengthen us, he teaches us what to do, and enables us to do what he teaches, precepts tho' never so excellent, yet if they be unpracticable, are altogether void and to no purpose; but this is the peculiar Priviledge of the Gospel, that it enables us to perform that Obedience which it requires of us: Thus is it the Power of God unto Salvation; that is, a Method every way suf-

sufficient in its own Nature for that purpose ; but then this is not so to be understood, as if there was nothing left to be done by us, for Christ has not so effected Mans Salvation, that nothing now remains for us to do, but idely to expect it ; *the Grace of God indeed has brought Salvation ; but then it is by teaching us to deny all Ungodliness and Worldly Lusts,* which supposes our willingness and our endeavours too to learn. Thus the manner of Christs appearance in the World could give no just Occasion of Offence to the *Jews*, it being the most proper means to effect those great and worthy ends of his coming, and to prove himself to be the *power of God*.

And as for Christs Death, if it was no dishonour for him to be born, neither was it any to die ; for the one seems naturally to follow from the other. And supposing the Person suffering to be Innocent, as Christ certainly was, the manner of his Death cannot reflect any thing of real dishonour upon him, so that all that can be gathered from *Christs Crucifixion* is only this, his greater love to us, and the *Jews* their greater malice and cruelty to him.

And further, the Circumstances that attended his Death spoke him to be more than a

common and ordinary Person; then was the *Sun darkened*, the Graves open'd, the Vail of the Temple Rent, and such general Convulsions of Nature every where appear'd, that it caus'd a Philosopher thus to argue, either that *Nature it self was dissolv'd*, or that the God of *Nature suffer'd*.

2. The Death of Christ could give no just Occasion of Offence to the *Jews*, if we consider the honorary consequences of it, for by this was afforded the greatest matter of Triumph to the Christian cause imaginable; for if Christ had not dyed he could not have risen again, and it was a greater Argument of his Power to raise himself from Death, then it would have been to have kept himself from dying.

Thus the Resurrection of Christ was the greatest Evidence of the Divinity of his Person and the Truth of his Doctrine.

And thus much as to the first general part of my Text in Answer to those Offences, *which the Jews took at Christ and his Religion*.

2. The second Scandal here cast upon the Gospel by the *Greeks*, was the Imputation of folly, *And to the Greeks Foolishness*.

Here I shall likewise vindicate the Gospel from this Aspersion, by speaking to these two particulars.

1. I shall show what little Reason the *Greeks* had to impute *Foolishness* to the Christian Doctrine, seeing this doth infinitely transcend the Religion of the *Gentiles* in the truth, and certainly of its Principles.

2. I shall show the Wisdom and Prudence of the Christian Practice.

The first of these shows the Improperness of the Objection as made by them, the other the falseness of it in it self. The first shows how unfit it was to be objected by the *Greeks*, the other how impossible it is to be defended by any; and both together, I hope, will sufficiently vindicate the Gospel from the least Imputation of folly.

1. I shall show the reasonableness of the Christian Doctrine, in Comparison of that of the *Gentiles*.

1. As it is a practical Institution or a Doctrine of Morality, so the very Heathens could not but testify their profound Veneration for it: all that their wit and malice could object against it in this particular being only that, which was indeed a tacit acknowledgment of its Excellence, *viz.* that it requir'd greater degrees of Holiness then was *consistent* with Humane nature, and that it put its Professors upon endeavours after unattainable Measures of Purity

See Pref.
to Amyal.
of Divine
Dreams.

rity and Piety. And as to the Mystical part of our Religion, what is there in it that doth not become the solemn and venerable Nature of a divinely reveal'd Religion? Indeed if we must reject every thing as false and foolish, because inexplicable and incomprehensible, as to the modes, then must we bid adieu to our Natural, as well as our Christian Religion.

But the great matter of offence to the *Greeks* was *Christ Crucified*, God and Man joyned in one Person, and suffering for the Expiation of Sin. *God manifested in the Flesh is certainly a great Mystery*, so also is the Union of the Soul and Body a thing altogether Inexplicable.

As for his dying as a Sacrifice for Sin, 'tis certain that Humane Sacrifices were frequently practis'd among the Heathens and look'd upon by some as expiatory.

I shall not here enquire into the first Ground and Original of those Sacrifices among them only shall leave it to Consideration, how far these tho' Wicked and Barbarous in them, yet might, in the Methods of Divine Providence, be suffered among the *Gentiles*, thereby to prepare their minds, facilitate their Conceptions, and in due time to convince them of the unreasonableness of Christ's Crucifixion for the

the Expiation of Sin. But more particularly.

It doth not become a Christian whilst he is answering the Scandals cast upon his Religion, unjustly to recriminate and load his Adversaries with false Imputations; the generous and vertuous Temper of Christianity, as it needs not, so it scorns to build its Reputation upon the Ruine of other Mens. Therefore I do not here go about to charge the Heathens, in general with that stupid and grossest sort of Idolatry, which some are too apt to do, as if they own'd no higher Object of their Adoration, then that of the Sun or the Soul of the World, and that all their Worship did not suppose the belief of any higher Deity.

I humbly conceive we have neither Reason nor Scripture in favour of this Assertion, but much of both to the contrary.

But tho' I go not thus far in my Charge against the *Gentiles* in general, yet this I may truly say, That their Notions of God and of the Divine Nature come very much short of those which Christianity affords us, both in respect of truth and certainty. But however true in some respects, their Notions of God might be in the *Theory*, yet their Religion, as a Doctrine of Worship, was very false and Idolatrous, and
tho'

tho' they did know God, yet they did not Worship him as God.

Thus all or most of their Religious Rites of Worship were but so many various Modes of Idolatry, and sometimes they became wicked in Imitation even of those Gods, whom they worshipp'd ; and upon this account, others sometimes, as they thought, out of a Principle of Devotion and Religion became *Atheists*, choosing rather to believe there were no Gods at all, rather then think them such, as some Men had represented them.

But now Christianity corrects the falseness of these mistakes, and teaches us to Worship the true God in a true manner, God did not require the Blood of *Bulls and Goats* in the *Jewish* Sacrifices for their own sakes, nor did he at all require the bloody and wicked Sacrifices of the *Gentiles*, the Gospel teacheth us that a broken and contrite Spirit is the true Christian Sacrifice, that we must offer *our Souls and Bodies an Holy living Sacrifice, acceptable unto God*, not by any Barbarous Cruelties exercis'd upon either ; but they are to be offered unto God in a way of Purity and Holiness.

Secondly, Christianity doth not only correct the false ; but also improves those better and
truer

truer Notions, which the *Gentiles* had, to higher Degrees of Perfection and Cleanness; then they were ever able to do.

1. The *Greeks* had some Notions of the being of God, and the Immortality of the Soul; but then they were very much mistaken in the Nature of the Deity, and their belief of a future State was joyn'd with a great deal of doubt and uncertainty, it was only the Gospel that perfectly acquainted us with the one, and fully assur'd us of the other. They had indeed sufficient Grounds to believe both; but yet they came as far short of the Strength and Evidence of those Arguments which the Gospel affords us, as reason comes short of Revelation.

Not but that Christians may also make a very good use of those Arguments which Reason and Philosophy afford us, for it much strengthens our Faith in the belief of those things declar'd in Scripture when we find the same also confirmed by reason, tho' Reason alone had been herein, but a weak and insufficient Ground of Faith.

Socrates, who yet died as it were a Martyr to his Natural Religion, argued very well, when he came to die, of a future State, yet it was with such a Degree of uncertainty, as

Christianity would have quite removed in the like Circumstances.

2. The *Greeks* had some Notions of the thing, tho' not of the Name and Nature of Original Sin, that is, they did acknowledg an Universal depravation of Nature; but then as to the cause and head of it, that was as unknown to them, as that of *Nilus*, they thought it rather from the beginning essential to our Natures, rather then any ways afterwards contracted, they looked upon it indeed as their Misery but not their fault: And being thus Ignorant of the Cause, they were as far to seek for the Remedy, the best and highest means that they ever used, in order thereunto, being only the imperfect Rules of Art and Philosophy.

But now Christianity, as it shows us the true Cause of it in *Adam*, so doth it provide a sufficient means for the removal of it, viz. the blood of Christ, and the Grace of the Gospel.

3. The *Greeks* were conscious to themselves of the necessity of a Divine Revelation, as may appear from that high esteem and constant recourse they had to the Oracles, their pretended Deities.

But

But then they were so far from being bettered by these, that this seemed the very Master-piece of the Devils malice and subtilty, thus to enact Wickedness by a Law, and to give it the Stamp of Divine Revelation.

But now God in these last days *both spoken to us by his Son*, by whom he hath fully and clearly revealed his Will to Mankind, thus have we the true Oracles of God committed to us, not with an intent to deceive us, but to guide us in the undoubted ways to Happiness.

4. The *Gentiles* had some Notions of the pacability of the Deity, this all their Sacrifices did necessarily imply, and indeed Mercy and Goodness seems in the first place to offer it self in that Notion of a Deity, which is Naturally Imprinted on the Minds of Men.

*Quamvis Meritis venia est indebita Nostris,
Magna tamen Spes est in bonitate Dei.*

Ovid.

But then Sin and Guilt being naturally full of Fears and Jealousies, tho' perhaps we might have some glimmering hopes of Pardon, which yet could not be fixt upon any good Ground or firm Foundation, yet we could never have

arriv'd at that full assurance, which the Gospel hath now given us: God having thus provided sufficient Answers to all those doubts and fears, with either the Malice of the Devil, or our own guilty Consciences can possibly suggest: So that we have now all the assurance of Gods being reconcil'd with us, upon the Terms propounded in the Gospel, that either God can give, or Man reasonably require.

But further, suppose that it had been knowable by the Light of Nature, that God, upon our begging Mercy would have pardoned our Sins; Yet we could never have any Reason to believe, that he would confer on us such high Degrees of Happiness, as now we are assur'd of, without a particular Revelation.

And thus much for the first thing, to show what little Reason the *Greeks* had to impute *Foolishness* to the Gospel, as to its Principles.

I shall now show the Wisdom and Prudence of the Christian Practice, and that upon these two Accounts. 1. As the Christian Practice doth the best secure our Temporal Happiness here. 2. Our Eternal Happiness hereafter.

As it best secures our Temporal Happiness here, and that in general by teaching us to act according to those two grand Principles of a Christian Life, Prudence and Innocence: The one teacheth us to do no hurt our selves, the other, as far as lawfully we can, to avoid the receiving it from others, however if our Prudence cannot secure us from Injuries abroad, yet our innocence will give us the satisfaction of a quiet mind at home, so that whatever Miseries befall us, whilst we thus act we have this comfort within our selves, that as far as Humane Frailty would permit, we neither by our unadvis'd Folly, nor wilful Wickedness incur'd the Misery.

Thus are we taught by the Gospel, to be Wise as Serpents and Innocent as Doves, not to suffer as Fools, nor live Apostates, not wholly to neglect our own self-Preservation, yet not so to regard it, as to forfeit our Religion. It teaches us in all Emergencies of Life to act so, as becomes Men, and as becomes Christians, and so to avoid the Imputation *both of Wicked and unreasonable Men.* But more particularly.

Whatever is truly desirable here in this World, may be reduc'd to some of these four Heads; Health, Riches, Honour, or Pleasure:

Now.

Now all these are ascrib'd to *Wisdom*, that is, Religion. 3 Prov. 16. 17. *Length of Days is in her Right-Hand, and in her Left Riches and Honour. Her ways are ways of Pleasantness, and all her Paths are Peace.*

1. Health, this is put in the first place, as being the Foundation of all the rest. It was Sin that first brought Death and Diseases into the World, and it is that which still continues and promotes them: thus the debauch'd and Luxurious Man does not only Sin against his Soul, but his Body too: and even those more retir'd and secret Sins of Envy, Malice and Hatred these prey upon the vital Spirits, and strangely discompose the Natural Temper and Disposition of Mens Bodies, whereas on the contrary, the calm, even, Christian Temper of Mind, together with the Observance of those Evangelical Precepts of Moderation, Temperance and Chastity, do most naturally preserve Men in Health, and either prevent or cure most Diseases.

So that our Saviour by his Sovereign Precepts did not only show himself a Physician of the Soul, but Body too.

2. Riches, this perhaps may be counted a great Paradox by some, to say that Justice and Honesty, and an universall Practise of Christianity,

nity, should tend to make Men Rich, whereas 'tis more generally believ'd, that Hipocrisy and Dissimulation, Violence and Oppression, and an Universal neglect of Religion and Conscience, that those are the more proper means to raise an Estate : but when things are rightly consider'd, we shall find that the Christian Practise doth really tend to make Men Rich, and that both upon a Natural and a Moral Account. 1. Upon a Natural Account, both as it frees Men from those many Expensive Lusts and Vices, as Pride, Vain-Glory, Ambition, and the like, which cannot be maintained, but at a great Charge, yea, sometimes to the Ruine of that Estate that bred them, and also as it engages Men to an Honest Industry in their several Places and Callings, which is the most Proper and Natural Means of raising a great and good Estate. 2. Upon a Moral or Divine Account as the Blessing of God doth Accompany Honesty and upright dealing. *1 Tim. 4. 8. But Godliness is Profitable unto all things, having the Promise of the Life, that now is, and that which is to come.* Thus tho' it be the future State, wherein Godliness, this Sun of Righteousness doth display its greatest Lustre, yet doth it also vouchsafe to enlighten this lower World, with its Golden Rays, *with the Promises*

mises of this Life as well as of another Life.

3. Honour, *Romans 6. 21. What Profit had you of those things, whereof you are now ashamed,* For Sin is both in its own Nature, and in its Consequences *Shameful*: Whereas Vertue and true Goodness is always honour'd and esteem'd even by those, who otherwise have no great Love or Value for them, and tho' there be a sort of Men in the World, who look upon Religion as a Mean despicable thing, not worthy of a Man of Honour as they call him; Men, who Glory in their Shame, and count it a piece of Galantry of Spirit to Sin with an high hand, in defiance of God and of their own Conscience, yet thanks be to God, these men tho' more in this Age then ever, yet are but few in number in Comparison of those other more excellent Persons, who both scorn and pity such horrid folly. And as for these Men, who thus seem to pride themselves in their own debaucheries, yet we have reason to suspect, that they are not in Earnest, when they thus speak that they do not really and indeed believe Sin to be so Honourable a thing as they pretend, and that first, because they then only Glory most in their Wickedness, when they are in Company like themselves, if there be any grave Religious Persons in presence, they then com-
mon-

monly are more Modest, and seem Naturally to show a kind of awful Veneration towards such Men.

2. When these Men would really and to purpose revile a Man, they do not then reproach him with his Vertues, but either with some real or pretended Vice and Wickedness; thus the Devil himself could not cast any Reproach or Scandal upon upright *Job*, as such, but he must be first falsely represented and unjustly accused of *Hypocrisie*. (*Doth Job serve God for nought*) before any thing of Reproach or Scandal could be fixt upon him.

4. The Christian Practice doth the best secure our Pleasure and Satisfaction here in this World, so that Religion is no such sower Melancholy disconsolate thing, as some Men represent it; God doth not envy Men the Enjoyment of just Pleasures and Recreations, so far as they are Virtuous and Innocent, and when they cease to be such, they cease to be Pleasures, truly so call'd; but they are then only the Pleasures of mad Men, consisting only in a fantastick Imagination, or the Pleasures of Fools, by which they purchase to themselves infinite and unspeakable Pains and Miseries. And as for those Troubles of Conscience and Sorrows of Repentance, which some Men are so much

offended at in Religion; these if rightly consider'd are not truly chargeable upon Religion, but upon the Violation of its Laws and breach of its Commands: Nor are the Tears of Repentance so bitter, as some imagine, for the true Penitent weeps, and at the same time rejoices that he doth so, his sorrow is kindly and Ingenuous, and has always this Satisfaction going along with it, that by this means he is reconciling himself to his offended Father. So that Religion in the just Practice of its Precepts, and due Observance of its Laws, is certainly the most chearful pleasant thing in the World.

And thus much for the first particular, that the Christian Practice doth the best secure our present Happiness here.

2. It best-secures our Eternal Happiness hereafter, by teaching us to Act in conformity to our own Principles, and by assuring us that by Holyness here we shall certainly arrive at Happiness hereafter.

For the Divine Providence in the very Order of Nature, and the first Constitution of things, has so order'd Affairs, that there is a Natural and Necessary Connexion betwixt Sin and Misery, and betwixt Holiness and Happiness; This the very Heathens were sensible of, that Holyness did either entitle a Man to Happiness,

ness, or at least to a Freedome from Misery ; So that if an Holy Man at last prove Miserable, with Reverence be it spoken, he may say that it was God that made him so, which we may assure our selves he never did, nor will make any so without their own fault. So that we must either grant, That Holyness will at last bring a Man to Happiness, or else assert what is impious to suppose, That God ever since his first Creation of Man made it his whole business to deceive him, both by those first Impressions made upon his Soul, and by his after Revelations. But this is so unworthy of God and contrary to all his Attributes, that it can never enter into the thoughts of any sober or considerate Man to Imagine.

Thus have I done with the two general Parts of the Text, wherein I have endeavoured to prove, what the Apostle here asserts Christ to be, that is, *the Power of God* in Opposition to the *Jews*, and *the Wisdom of God* in Opposition to the *Gentiles*.

And now I hope I shall not need to make any Apology for a Discourse of this Nature, for Meditations upon such Subjects as these are not Matters of mere Speculation only, nor are they antiquated now by the distance of time from that of the *Apostles* ; but are even still of

great Concernment to the present State of Religion.

'Tis true indeed that we have not now *Jews and Gentiles* to deal withal, as the *Apostles* had, but yet we have as inveterate Enemies against Religion in general, and the *Protestant Religion*, as now by Law established in particular, as the *Jews and Gentiles* were against the Christians. And it is observable, that so maliciously are they set against us and our Religion, that they care not from whence they fetch their Weapons and Arguments, whether from *Jew* or *Gentile* or Hell it self, provided only they can by any means annoy us, or get any advantage over us. And sometimes they make use of the same Arguments, or the same a little variously modify'd, which the *Jews and Gentiles* did against the Christians.

It is therefore our great Duty and Interest rightly to understand the Grounds and Reasons of our own Religion, as also the Nature and Force of our Adversaries Arguments, and the Various Ways and Methods by which they make their attempts upon us.

This if we rightly do, we shall not only thereby barely defend our selves; but also with Advantage and Reputation to our Religion repell our Adversaries; for I am apt to believe

lieve that the Christian Cause got more Advantage by those solid Vindications and those rational Apologies, which the Apostles and Primitive Fathers made for it, then it suffer'd by the Force or Malice of the Opposition, Occasion being thus given it by answering the Objections, to exert its own Strength, and to bring forth and show the inexhausted Treasures of its own Truth. Whereas on the contrary, there is nothing wherein a good Cause can possibly be injur'd, but only by a weak defence.

I shall now only make some short practical Observations from a more general review of the Words, and so conclude, *But we Preach Christ Crucified, &c.*

Hence we may observe the great Duty and Office of a Minister of the Gospel, to Preach *Christ Crucified*, that is, to declare the whole Will of God to Man, as it is plainly and clearly laid down in Scripture, without any Tincture of our own private Humors, Interests or Inclinations, nor must we arrest Scripture in favour of any Party or Faction, but must with the greatest sincerity and impartiality study to find out the true Sense of Scripture, not to make a new one of our own.

We must Preach not only the more easie and pleasing, but also the more difficult Duties of Christianity, *Christ Crucified*, that is, the Doctrine of Mortification, of Passive as well as Active Obedience, &c. But more particularly,

We much Preach *Christ Crucified* in Opposition to three sorts of Men in the World, 1. Those of the Church of *Rome*, 2. Some later *Enthusiasts* of our own, 3. The prophane and *Atheistically* inclin'd Persons of the Age. I shall not consider these in their utmost latitude, for this would be too remote from our present purpose; but only so far as they seem offended at the Gospel upon the same or like Accounts that the *Jews and Gentiles* were here against Christ Crucified; so far only as they also in their several ways look upon the Cross of Christ, either *as a Stumbling Block with the Jews*, or *as Foolishness with the Gentiles*.

1. In Opposition to those of the Church of *Rome*. But this perhaps will seem a great Paradox to some, to say that any of that Church should be offended at the *Cross of Christ*, those who pay so much Honour and Veneration to it, those who institute whole Orders of Men in Honour to the Name and in Imitation of the humble and *Crucified Jesus*, to say that these are of-

offended at the *Cross of Christ*, this perhaps may be thought as great a scandal cast upon them, as those which were cast either by *Jew* or *Gentile* upon *Christ Crucified*.

But yet we know 'tis possible to betray *Christ* by that Kiss, by which it is pretended to Honour him.

But it is not the *Cross of Christ* in this sense, that those men are offended at; but it is the Humble and Peaceable Doctrines of the *Crucified Jesus*, those Commands of his which do not so well agree with their Interests or Inclinations: The Doctrines of Loyalty and Passive Obedience, of Truth, Sincerity, and open Profession of Faith, tho' with the hazard of Life, these and such like are the Doctrines of Christ, which these men are offended at.

And these *Romanists* like the *Jews*, seem to be offended at that mean Appearance that Christ and his Doctrine makes in the World, that is, that it is not so exactly suited to maintain and bear up that Pomp, Grandeur, and Interest, which that Church has unreasonably raised it self unto, upon the Ruines of Truth, and Corruption of those humble and peaceable Doctrines of *Christ Crucified*.

And it might easily be made appear, how most of the *Roman* Doctrines, those, I mean, wherein

wherein they differ from the Church of *England*, as those of Deposing Princes and absolving Subjects from their Obedience, of Purgatory, and Prayers for the Dead, and the like, how these both in their own Natures, and as they are managed by those that entertain them, do more Naturally tend to get Riches, and maintain a secular Pomp and Grandeur, then to promote Piety in the lives of their Professours.

These are the Men, who partly by their Contrariety of Doctrine, partly by their loose Rules of Conscience, partly by their frivolous Distinctions and Evasions have made many of the most weighty Duties of Christianity of none effect.

And some of these *Roman* Doctrines, particularly that of Disobedience to, and Resistance of lawful Authority, has been exactly copied out by some, I cannot say of our Communion, those I mean, of the Separation: I am no Friend to the fixing of bad Names upon any sort of Men, yet this, I think, I may truly say, that there is more real Popery, so far as it is false and dangerous, in this single Opinion of resisting of Authority, which is so much espoused by some of our *Separatists*, then there is in all the Innocent Ceremonies and those

those other things which have occasion'd so many groundless Clamours against the Church of *England*;

Indeed this Doctrine of Resistance is too ugly to appear bare-faced in the World, and therefore has always had some specious pretence or other, as the Glory of God; the Purity of Religion, the Liberty of Conscience, or the property of the Subject, and all these back'd with a great many of false and Foolish, Silly and dangerous Distinctions.

But the most modern Mask that this Opinion has appeared in of late, is this, that Non-Resistance, say they, was only a temporary Command, proper only for those first and primitive Ages of the Church, when Christians suffered according to the Laws of the Country; but the Case was much different in after Ages, when the Laws were in Favour of Religion, and Christians persecuted contrary to Law.

I shall not need to speak much in Answer to this Argument, the Weakness and Falseness of it being already fully and sufficiently shown by several Worthy Persons.

I shall only intimate these two things. 1. To say that Passive Obedience was only a Duty Incumbent on Christians in the first Ages.

of the Church, is an Assertion without the least Ground or Evidence of Proof; for Scripture speaks of Obedience to Authority as a Constant indispensable Duty of Christianity, without any Restriction or Limitation, as to time or place: and we must know that Scripture was intended as a Rule of *Faith and Manners*, not only to that particular time wherein it was writ, but also to all succeeding Ages; and it would be a great Reflection upon the Scripture, as to the Perfection of it, if it requir'd *Non-Resistance* of Authority only as a temporary Duty, and yet never in the least to intimate, how long it should continue thus, or how we should know when the time was expired, or by what Rules and Measures we should guide our selves, when things came to be otherwise.

I hope they will not say that this is *Casus Omisus* in Scripture, and so to be supplied either by the *Popish Additions*, or *Euthusiastick Interpretations* of later Ages.

But in short, these mens way of arguing seems very much to resemble that of Mr. Hobb's in another Case, of whom it is observ'd, *that he supposed Men worse then they were, and from thence drew Principles to make them worse, then otherwise they would be.* That is, from the Ob-
ser-

servation of the General Depravation of Humane Nature, and the Vicious Inclinations of most Men, hence he unwarily drew such Conclusions as these, that Violence and Oppression, Self-Preservation and Interest, without any respect to any higher Principles, are the Prime and Fundamental Dictates of Nature and Reason in general, without ever distinguishing betwixt pure and corrupted Nature, or betwixt Reason truly so call'd, and that which is only the Dictate of inferior Sense and Appetite.

So these Men from some irregular Proceedings, either falsely imputed to the Christians about *Julian's* time, or if truly, yet but the Miscarriages of some particular Men, yet from such premises as these, would draw such false and dangerous Conclusions, as should justify and legitimate the like irregular Practices to all succeeding Ages.

2. This Assertion has a very bad Influence upon several other Duties of Christianity; for thus they argue, where there is any Variation of Circumstances now, different from what was in the Apostles times, there that ceases to be a Duty now, which was one then. I deny not, but where the thing is in its own Nature indifferent, and the Reason of the Obligation de-

pend upon the present Circumstances, there the Circumstances being chang'd, the Obligation ceases; but it is not so in his Case, Obedience to Magistrates is an Eternal Duty, and that which the very Essential Constitutions and Principles of Government require of us, here the Variation of some smaller Circumstances will not alter the Nature of the thing; if it did, we might also by the same way of Arguing prove, that voluntary Charity to the Poor now is no Duty incumbent upon Christians, this indeed, we may say, was a Duty in the first Ages of the Church, because there were then no Laws in Favour of the Poor, but their whole Subsistence depended upon Voluntary Contributions; but the case is far otherwise now, and therefore this kind of Charity ceases now to be a Duty; the weakness of this Argument, I suppose easily appears to any Considerate Man at the first view: For tho' there is Provision now made for the Poor by the Law, yet notwithstanding there is no Law, neither of God nor Man, against Voluntary Charity to the Poor; So tho' the Laws, thanks be to God, be in favour of our Religion now, yet there are no Laws, neither of God nor Man, in the least to encourage Rebellion or Resistance of lawful Authority for Religions sake.

2. We must *Preach Christ Crucified*, both in Opposition to some Hereticks of Old, who tell us, that Christ did not really and truly suffer, but in Appearance only, so subverting our Faith, and also to some later *Enthusiasts* of our own Age. These seem to be offended upon the same Account that the *Jews* were here in the Text, that is, at the plainness and simplicity of the Gospel, those Men think every thing Foolish, that has not something of *Mystery* and *Enthusiasm* in it, making all Religion to consist in airy Notions and nice Speculations, these are the Religious Chymilts of the Age, who think they then only speak nothing to the purpose, when they speak so as to be understood, making it their great business to involve and intangle the otherwise plain and easie Doctrines of Christianity. These Men pretend to make Religion a far more profound and mysterious thing, than God ever made it; and whenever any one Argues any thing against 'em according to the best and truest Principles of Reason or Religion, they then only return this Answer, That they are *Carnal and Natural Men*, and therefore cannot apprehend the deep things of the Spirit of God; but this is only falsely to interpret Scripture, and poorly to beg what they should indeed prove.

3. We

3. We must *Preach Christ Crucified* in Opposition to the Profane and Atheistical Persons of the Age, who look upon all Religion in general as a very Foolish thing ; but more especially are they offended at the *Cross of Christ*, and think it the highest pitch of folly imaginable to talk of dying for the sake of Religion. These are the *Hobbiſts* of the Age, who make Interest and Self-Preservation the great and fundamental Principle of Reason and Religion.

And these men stick not to tell us, that in Obedience to our own *Dear Sovereign Self-Preservation*, it is lawful in Words to deny even *Christ* himself before men, and then in Answer to that place of our Saviour, *Whoever denies me before men, him will I deny before my Father which is in Heaven*, in Answer to this they tell us, *that whatever a Subject is forced to do, so that he do not the thing on his own accord, that is not his Action, nor to be imputed to him ; but it is the Action of the Sovereign, and to be imputed to the laws of the Country.* To this I answer, First, That in times of Persecution, according to this Interpretation, it is not possible for any but a Sovereign to deny his *Saviour*, because all the Actions of a Subject in his case are imputable only to the Prince ; but this I look upon as a very false and foolish Assertion. 2. If

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the Subject in this case may transfer the fault from himself to the Prince, why may not the Prince by the same reason transfer it from himself upon the Laws, according to *his own words, Factum illud esse Civitatis Factum & Legibus Imputandam*: So that whereas Christs words threaten a Punishment upon some Person thus offending, the result according to him will be only this, that those Laws that deny Christ before Men, Christ will deny those Laws before his Father, which is in Heaven: But this is such a trifling with Scripture, as is unworthy of a Divine or a Philosopher. Thus much for the first inference.

2. We Preach *Christ Crucified, to the Jews a Stumbling Block, &c.* Hence I observe, that the unreasonable offence or scandal that some Men take at the performance of our Duty, is no just Ground or Reason for us to forbear the doing of it; for we must distinguish betwixt a *Scandal given, and a Scandal taken*, we must not indeed give any just Occasion of Offence to others, in things that depend meerly upon our own Liberty, but if others will unreasonably take Offence at us in the Performance of our Duty, that as we cannot help, so must we not so far take notice of it, as to be disobedient to the Lawful Commands of our Superiours,

perious, under pretence of being civil to our Equals.

3. Hence we are taught, not to be offended at the Cross of Christ, or to think the worse of our Religion by reason of the mean appearance of its first Founder, *the Holy Jesus*: This would be such a piece of Folly, as if a condemned Person should refuse his Pardon, only because it was not brought him by one in splendid Apparel, or because it was not writ with Golden Letters: Nor let us be offended at the pious severities of the Christian Institution, as if Religion went about to build the Christian upon the Ruines of the *Man*, and that *Mercification* was only a more mild and gentle Word for *Martyrdom*, whereas Religion requires nothing of us, but what really tends to the Perfection of our Nature, to the good of Humane Society here, and the fitting and preparing us for the society of Saints and Angels in Heaven; whither God of his Infinite Mercy bring us all, for the sake of Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be ascrib'd all Honour, Glory and Praise both now and for evermore. *Amen.*

ERRATA

p. 9. r. offended, p. 16. l. 1. r. reasonableness, p. 32. l. 1. leave out the first line, p. 37. r. wrest. In the Epistle Dedicatory. p. 1. r. Counties. p. 2. l. 4. r. same, ditto l. 18. for that r. your p. last, l. 5. r. Councils.